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Identical letters dated 14 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you information regarding the horrific massacre of peaceable civilians that armed terrorist groups committed in the village of Zarah, Hama governorate.

At dawn on Thursday, 12 May 2016, terrorists belonging to the Nusrah Front, Ahrar al Sham and allied factions infiltrated the town of Zarah, Hama governorate, and perpetrated a horrific massacre of the town's peaceable civilian residents, slaughtering them as they slept in their beds, regardless of whether the victims were children, women, elderly persons or sick persons. The terrorists mutilated the victims' bodies with a savagery that makes one's blood run cold. Before perpetrating this massacre, the terrorists had bombarded the village with rockets, mortar shells and "hell cannons", destroying homes and private and public property. Many innocent civilians died or were injured as a result of the initial onslaught, while a number of others were executed on the Rastan Bridge. Dozens more civilians also sustained injuries of varying severity. In addition, the terrorists abducted many of the residents of Zarah, mostly children and women, and took them to a location that remains unknown.

Many armed groups, which certain Western and other States consider to be "moderate armed groups", including such groups as the Nusrah Front, the Ahrar al Sham Islamic Movement, the Homs Corps, Kata'ib Ahl al Sunnah and the Armies of Homs, unabashedly announced their responsibility for this bloody massacre on their social media sites. They confirmed that they had jointly attacked Zarah and perpetrated the massacre as had been planned and agreed on in advance.

The horrific massacre that the armed terrorist groups committed is part of the series of systematic terrorist attacks that have been direct against several Syrian cities on the direct orders of the extremist and fundamentalist regimes in Riyadh, Ankara and Doha. Those attacks are designed to thwart efforts to stop the shedding of Syrian blood and to undermine the Geneva talks, the de-escalation measures and the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Syria. This horrific massacre was perpetrated just as the representatives of the United States, France, Britain and Ukraine in the Security Council refused to add the Nusrah Front and Ahrar al Sham organizations to the list of terrorist groups, undertakings and entities maintained by the Council. That course of action is indicative of those States' encouragement of

the crimes committed by those organizations and of their insistence on ignoring those crimes. It also demonstrates that those States are not serious about countering terrorism or halting the fighting in Syria.

The Zarah massacre is the product of the refusal of the Security Council to condemn the heinous acts of terrorism being committed by armed terrorist groups throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, and the refusal of certain Council members to take deterrent and punitive measures without delay against those States and regimes that support and finance terrorism, including the regimes in Riyadh, Ankara and Doha, which have not hesitated to employ terrorism, various armed terrorist groups and other base means to achieve their vile goals.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic affirms that this horrific terrorist massacre and other terrorist attacks will not deter it from continuing to fulfil its duty to counter terrorism and strive to bring about a political solution to the Syrian crisis through an intra-Syrian dialogue and under Syrian leadership, leading to the elimination of terrorism; the reconstruction of that which was destroyed by the terrorists and their partners, financial backers and supporters; and the restoration of security and stability for the Syrian people.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Security Council and the Secretary-General to condemn immediately this massacre that was committed by terrorists. It also calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security by taking preventive and punitive measures immediately in respect of those regimes and States that support and fund terrorism, including the regimes of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar. The Council must prevent those States from continuing to fund terrorism and undermining international security and peace, and compel them to implement fully the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015).

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative